

**Special Village Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 8, 2015 - 7:00 p.m.**

A special Village Board meeting was held on the above date at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present:

PRESENT: Mayor Patricia Abato
Trustee Frank Hagen, Trustee Robert Morris
Trustee Edward Markunas

ALSO PRESENT: Virginia Menschner, Village Clerk
Terry Rice, Village Attorney

ABSENT: Trustee Matthew Byrne

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the special Village Board meeting.

SET DATE FOR PUBLIC HEARING FOR 2015-2016 BUDGET:

The Mayor said the first item on the agenda is to set the date for the public hearing for the 2015-2016 budget. A motion to set the date for 8:00 p.m. on April 13, 2015 was made by Trustee Morris, seconded by Trustee Hagen. Upon vote, the motion was carried.

CHANGE DATES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS:

The Mayor said we need to change the dates for the public hearing for the water, and sewer rates. The public hearing for the water rates, and the sewer rates will be on April 13 at 8:00 p.m. A motion setting the hearing was made by Trustee Hagen, seconded by Trustee Morris. Upon vote, the motion was carried.

BUY-OUT PROGRAM:

The Mayor said the third item on the agenda is the Buy-Out program through FEMA - the Governor's Storm Recovery for Squires Gate. The Mayor said this Board has been given the opportunity to review all the information regarding the program as well as meetings with the residents as to their feelings about the program and to also receive the interested parties for the buy-out. The Mayor asked if the Board would like to speak on the buy-out program.

Trustee Morris said we looked at this buy-out program and he knows he was one of the ones who was initially in favor of this buy-out program. He said as we got more into it he originally thought we would only have a couple of homes looking to take part in it but as it turns out quite a few families want to participate in it. Part of the problem we are facing, and he thinks everybody knows it - you have seen the preliminary budget - is that we would have to

outlay this money and we are talking about millions of dollars. We don't have the money. We would have to borrow more money again and that has been our problem right along. We are in debt and in all fairness to the Village, while he can sympathize and empathize with all the residents in Squires Gate, and he speaks for himself - and he thinks the other members - we have decided not to participate - he has decided not to participate in the buy-out program simply on the grounds that people have raised legitimate concerns that if we took down a number of homes it would depreciate the value of other peoples homes and he doesn't know what that would start. He said we would lose revenue for the Village - a substantial amount of revenue - at a time when we are millions of dollars in debt. So based on that, again the money to buy the homes, rip them out, assessors, bank sales, etc., etc., is all money that the Village would have to fund and at this point in time we don't have the money to fund this. So he is voting no on this buy-out program.

Trustee Hagen said he would love to buy every house in Squires Gate but he doesn't think we have that kind of money. And move everybody, which would be the right thing to do. You can't pick and choose and the way the Village is going now with finances he doesn't think it is a good idea to spend another couple of million dollars to not get anywhere. So in his opinion, we can't afford it and he has no choice so he is going to vote no.

Trustee Markunas said he would like to mimic the sentiments of Mr. Morris and Mr. Hagen as he sits here tonight and listens to their concerns. His concerns are very similar. He said he does understand the burden that is put upon him, the residents of Squires Gate, and as it relates to the flooding and the damage that it does cause. Trustee Markunas said he also must consider the total impact of the Village residents on a whole, which would be another loss of or another cost to the Village to do this. The financial impact is not only a loss to the Village but the homes that would remain if this program went through - the remaining homes in Squires Gate - and this is why another reason that the Mayor, along with the Board, wrote a letter lobbying the Town of Ramapo to pursue the bonding for the siphoning system, which he fully supported to have the Town implement or get this bonding. So for these reasons he too is not in favor of the buy-out program.

The Mayor said she just wanted to mention that Trustee Byrne is not here tonight and it is by no fault of himself. He unfortunately had vacation planned and with the change of dates of the meetings his vacationing was already in place but he did want her to convey to all of you that this was something that he too felt very strongly about and was very upset that he would not be here tonight on such an important issue but it is not because he is not concerned. It is because of the change of dates of the meeting. So he apologizes for not being here.

The Mayor said this is a very difficult situation in the Squires Gate area. She obviously - it is the Board's decision not to go forward with the project. She said she did want to tell them that she has been in touch with Ellen Jaffee and we are right now once again have reached out to the Army Corps of Engineers and will be setting up another meeting with them. As Mr. Markunas mentioned she has sent a letter to Christopher St. Lawrence, along with the rest of the Board which it is signed for - we sent it registered return receipt so he cannot tell us that he did not get it. She said she asked for a response to give us information on the announcements and commitments that he had made that if in fact the bond did not go through for the quarry that he has committed to get a bond for it. So hopefully we will have something in writing from him to back up what he has told publicly with regards to the siphoning system at the quarry. The Mayor said she personally will continue, and she knows these Board members will as well, to find ways to help with the flooding at the Squires Gate area. She will continue to pray that there are no more flooding rains in the interim and will continue to hope for remediation and assistance in doing so. So therefore it is the majority vote of the Board they have decided not to continue with the buy-out program. She said she does not see a lot of Squires Gate residents here this evening. She said she will in fact put a letter together and send out to everyone who expressed interest in the program and have that sent out to them tomorrow. So if you do see anyone please let them know but she will be sending out letters to every homeowner that had interest in the program.

Some people from the audience said people didn't know about the meeting. The Mayor said it was on the agenda. A gentleman said he did not see it. The Mayor said you had to go into the agenda portion of the website. The Mayor said we did not intend to have anyone speak tonight because the last meeting they had the opportunity. So this was basically just for the Board to have the time to review all the information and then vote on it tonight. But as she said she will be sending out tomorrow morning now that she knows the results a letter to each one of the homeowners that expressed interest in the program to let them know what the Board's decision was on it.

The Mayor said we also have to set the public hearing for the property tax cap. A motion to set the hearing for April 13 at 7:40 p.m. was made by Trustee Morris, seconded by Trustee Hagen. Upon vote, the motion was carried.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m. was made by Trustee Hagen, seconded by Trustee Morris. Upon vote, the motion was carried.

